

INFORMATION PAPER

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY
OF FOOD (ACMSF)**

**The Microbiological Safety of Food Funders' Group (MSFFG) : its
coordination function**

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide Members with information about the Microbiological Safety of Food Funders' Group (MSFFG) in order to demonstrate its function in bringing together the public funders of microbiological food safety work.
2. The attached document sets out the terms of reference and membership of the group. Paragraph 8 describes the way in which the group operates. To date, it has produced papers on *Campylobacter* and *E. coli* O157 research and its paper on *Salmonella* research has been circulated with the papers for this meeting (acm/566). It next plans to bring together a summary of research on food hygiene practices and behaviour and it will also be updating the report on *Campylobacter* research.

Secretariat

March 2002

MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD FUNDERS GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Background to the MSFFG

1. The Microbiological Safety of Food Funders' Group (MSFFG) was set up in 1997, in succession to the Interdepartmental Group on Microbiology, to include all public funders of microbiological food safety research in the UK.
2. MSFFG membership (see Annex A) is drawn from the FSA, the Department of Health, DEFRA, the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). Decisions on whether to invite other organisations (e.g. Wellcome Trust, Medical Research Council (MRC), etc.) will be taken at a later date.

Terms of Reference

3. The MSFFG covers the whole of the food chain and has the following terms of reference:

"To assist the co-ordination of publicly funded research and development on the microbiological safety of the food chain with a view to informing the R&D effort, identifying gaps and overlaps, and providing reports as appropriate."

4. The MSFFG does not have a role in managing or directing research projects or programmes, nor does it hold a budget. These aspects of research are the responsibility of the funding organisations.
5. The common food poisoning organisms are included within its remit, as are 'emerging' foodborne pathogens. The Group discusses specific areas of food microbiology research such as those relating to HACCP or microbiological risk assessment. The MSFFG also covers work on organisms which are predominantly of animal welfare and health significance (e.g. *Mycobacterium bovis*, *Brucella*, etc.), but only where they have a food safety implication.

6. The MSFFG does not have a role in the co-ordination of microbiological food surveillance. However, it does cover research in support of surveillance.

Proposed Output of the MSFFG

7. The MSFFG has adopted a standard format for categorising Government funded research relating to the microbiological safety of food (MSF). This enables the Group to produce of a list of all currently funded MSF research which is updated on a six monthly basis.
8. Each MSFFG meeting focuses on a particular area of research (e.g. *E. coli* O157/VTEC, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*). Through the exchange of information on the work currently funded and subsequent discussion, position papers are produced on areas currently funded for these identified topics.

Role of MSFFG Members

9. MSFFG Members, as representatives of funding bodies, are responsible for providing project details of all their currently funded research relating to the microbiological safety of food.
10. MSFFG Members are also responsible for submitting project details and supporting abstracts, and for producing papers on identified topics of research which are then the focus of each MSFFG meeting. Line listings are prepared which include details of the project number, the project title, the organisation carrying out the research, and the start date and duration of the work.
11. MSFFG Members are responsible for assisting with the implementation of the terms of reference.

MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD FUNDERS GROUP**– MEMBERSHIP**

<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
Roger Skinner (Chairman)	FSA Microbiological Safety Division
Judith Hilton (Deputy Chair)	FSA Microbiological Safety Division
Jonathan Back	FSA Microbiological Safety Division
Paul Cook	FSA Microbiological Safety Division
Mary Howell	FSA Meat Science and Strategy Division
Susan Pryde	FSA Scotland
Gerry McCurdy	FSA Northern Ireland
Cecil McMurray	DARDNI
Ailsa Wight	¹ DH Public Health
Paul Gayford	² DEFRA Animal Health
Peter Costigan	DEFRA Chief Scientist Group
Peter Stevenson	DEFRA Chief Scientist Group

¹ DH = Department of Health

² DEFRA = Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Meg Wilson	BBSRC
<u>Contributory Members</u> Andrew Rushworth Phil Morgan	³ SEERAD FSA Wales
<u>Secretariat</u> Kathryn Callaghan June Lock Marion Castle	FSA Microbiological Safety Division FSA Microbiological Safety Division FSA Microbiological Safety Division

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³ SEERAD = Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department